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THE BELLE OF LIMA.

Her Beauty and Fascinations, and the Care Taken of Her by a Jealous Mother.

Lima from the earliest times has been noted for its beautiful women; not merely for symmetrical features, but elegance of physique and graceful movement.

In speaking of the women of Lima reference is made to the superior class of Spanish descendants, the genealogies of Pizarro and his followers, who, as Prescott states, shod their horses with silver shoes and gambled away in one night the accumulated wealth of centuries.

A typical Lima belle is of greater stature than the North American model of beauty, possessing a well-rounded, graceful form, small and elegantly moulded feet, and pearly teeth.

The eyes are dark, large, and so bewitching in their expression as to drive care from the skipper's mind as he whirls his ideal beauty through the long hallway, his soul keeping time with the spirited waltzes, until gathered into the folds of the same manta with his senorita. The essentiality of the life of a Liman belle is pleasure.

The young ladies (senoritas) of the family either accompany their parents in the evening ramble or are attended by their personal servants; usually two young ladies walk together, followed by their attendants. Should they meet a gentleman of their acquaintance, they cordially invite him to join them in their passo.

If he be a Peruvian he takes his place behind the ladies and chats over their shoulders as they pass along. Should he happen to be a grego, as foreigners are termed, he would be politely asked to walk in the rear, and would suffer from solid indifference unless he should sufficiently compensate the attendants—which is no difficult matter—to remain in some alley until the return of the ladies.

If this arrangement is consented to by all, the young people seek secluded streets, where they are not liable to meet with parents and friends and where all formality is thrown aside.

If it should transpire that this gentleman calls upon these young ladies the following evening, the coolness of his reception would indicate that they had never before met; but he would be ushered into the parlor and hospitably received by the family.

Young ladies are not allowed to receive gentlemen callers in private. One of the parents, a sister or an attendant, assists in entertaining, and at times the whole family.

The mother, knowing the passionate disposition of her race, constantly endeavors to screen her daughter from secluded male company until her marriage. After marriage she is free to invite to her house all her lovers and to there entertain them, whether her husband is there or not.

This newly gained freedom extends further—to the extent that she is now at liberty to indulge in flirtations upon the streets or in the gardens, with her bewitching glances luring her admirers to her home.

However, many daughters are exasperated beyond patience from observing the flirtations of a married sister or other relative, and devote their evenings upon the balcony passing notes to their lovers.

Perhaps he, a stranger, first attracted her attention as she leaned over the baluster by passing several times beneath the balcony. If she desires his acquaintance he receives some signal which emboldens him to bow or pass a card to the lady.

The initiatory being over, evenings are passed in this manner until the acquaintance has ripened into friendship, when the gentleman is free to call or stroll through the plaza or garden. These balcony scenes being clandestine, they are not enacted until a late hour, when the mother is unconscious of her daughter's whereabouts, as she has been carefully watched until she is safely lodged in her bedroom, with its barred windows.—San Francisco Chronicle.

DEMOCRATIC ENGLISH WOMEN.

The Kitchen and Drawing-room Dancing together at Christmas and Other Festival Times.

English women are in many things more democratic than American women dare to be, particularly in their intercourse with servants and women in a lower social sphere. Perhaps it is because the line of demarcation is more clearly marked there than here, and women dare to be more familiar because they know it will be understood and no advantage taken of it.

For example, at the Christmas ball given to the servants in English country houses it is customary for the family to go down in the servants' hall, and while the father and mother look on the son of the house treads a measure with the pleased and smiling housekeeper, while the daughter not infrequently allows the blushing and grinning coachman to walk through a lanciers with her.

Young women in America have been known to run off with coachmen, but they never dare, even on Christmas Eve, dance the lanciers with them.

The gulf is quite as wide between society women and the shop-girls, but it is not so in London, where a society of aristocratic women give an annual "fete and masque" to the working girls of the English capital.

This society has been in existence for five years, and every season they exert themselves to give the hard-working women, whose play days are all too few, one evening of unalloyed pleasure.

The last annual ball was more than ever beautiful and enjoyable. The members of the society invited a lot of the titled Americans, the new Duchess of Marlborough and Lady Randolph Churchill among them, and had a gay crowd of fashionable people to mingle with the shop-girls.

THE INDIANS AND SNAKES.

Very Curious Theories and Traditions of the Red Men of the Northwest.

A correspondent of the St. Paul Pioneer Press, writing from Mandan, Dak., says, the Indian who does not hate a snake is a rarity.

This part of the country, before it was pretty well settled with Canadians, was liberally furnished with reptiles, and today, during the summer time, they are to be met with in sufficient abundance, though it is seldom that the poisonous varieties trouble one with their presence.

The Indians have various theories as to the reason for the existence of the snakes that offend their sight. The theories all tend in one direction, however; that they are sent as a punishment to those who have offended the Great Spirit.

Up the Missouri River, a distance of forty miles, is a warm spring, back in the bluffs, which flows all the year, winter and summer. The water is agreeable to drink, in fact, it is excellent, and is a great deal softer than that which awaits the thirsty traveler in that region.

The fact that it is warm serves as an attraction to reptiles, who, in the fall of the year hie themselves thither to spend the winter.

Of course the chance traveler cannot see them when the thermometer is below zero, curled up in their hibernating condition, but as they can be seen in the fall or spring, going in behind the waters and coming out therefrom, there is no doubt in the minds of white or red men as to their business there.

The Indians call it the "snake house," and they all avoid it as though it was the entrance to the infernal regions. They regard the water as being tainted, and it matters not how thirsty they may be they never taste it. They look upon the spring as a storehouse belonging to the Great Spirit, in which he keeps the reptiles that are grown for the purpose of terrifying and chastening his erring children.

An aged Indian was laying down to me with considerable eloquence a short time ago the theories which he and his tribe believed as to the snakes, and I asked him why, if he regarded the reptile as being a dispensation from the Great Spirit, they were not around the whole year in this locality attending to business.

"Does not the red man need trials and chastenings as much in the winter time as in the summer?" I asked.

A grunt, which meant an affirmative answer, was forthcoming on this point.

"Then why did he not make a snake that would be able to stand the winter, so that he might be on hand to punish you then for your winter misdoings?"

"Ugh!" said the Indian. "Great Spirit two kinds snakes. Give spotted ones rest half year. Frost and snow winter snake enough. Great Spirit leave to frost and snow job punishing wicked during winter time. They take care."

There is something in all this. The red man has but a slim chance to enjoy himself during the winter season. He has no furnace—warmed residence, and the torture that he undergoes when the thermometer is down low must be a great deal worse than the presence of a good many snakes. He regards it as such, and thinks he is entitled to the luxury of a few peccadilloes, seeing that he has to pay for them so dearly.

But the nineteenth century Indian is of the opinion that he has fallen on good days. He sees reptiles that are small in size, whose duty it is to keep him in order; but the reptilian punishments that his fathers had to undergo were, to his mind far more terrible than any he has to submit to now.

He takes me to the probable abode of a huge reptile that wormed for himself a house out of solid rock in this vicinity—a hole possessing in its windings a snake-like character eighty feet long, ending in a cul de sac about ten feet square.

This peculiar underground passage, into which an Indian took me on my hands and knees a short time ago, is the reputed abode of a monster of the snake tribe, who used to wander around in this region, intent on keeping in order the wicked Indians with an eternal commission from the Great Spirit to do what he deemed necessary in the good work.

HOUDIN'S INGENUITY.

Curious Domestic Amusements of the King of the Conjurers.

Houdin acquired a comfortable competence by the exercise of his art; and he built a handsome villa at St. Gervais, near Blois.

When he had retired from business, he amused himself by introducing various curious inventions into his place and the ground attached to it.

The garden gate was situated some four hundred yards from the house. A visitor had only to raise a diminutive brass knocker, and let it fall upon the forehead of a fantastic face—making but a faint sound—when a large bell was set in motion in the villa. At the same time the gate swung open automatically, the plate, bearing the name "Robert Houdin," disappeared, and another took its place, on which was engraved the word, "Entrez."

When the postman delivered the letters he had brought, he was instructed to drop them through a slit in the gate into the receptacle provided for the purpose. The box, directly this was done, started of its own accord on its journey to the front door of the house by means of a miniature elevated railway.

Houdin invented, too, an ingenious contrivance by which, while lying in bed, he could feed his horse in a stable fifty yards from the villa; for, on touching a small button, there was put in motion an apparatus that caused the exact portion of oats required for the animal's meal to fall into the manger from the granary above.

By another curious piece of mechanism a little bench that stood beside a ravine in a remote part of the grounds, was so constructed that immediately any person sat down upon it the machine automatically traversed a narrow bridge that spanned the gorge, and, having deposited its occupant on the other side, the bench returned to its original position.

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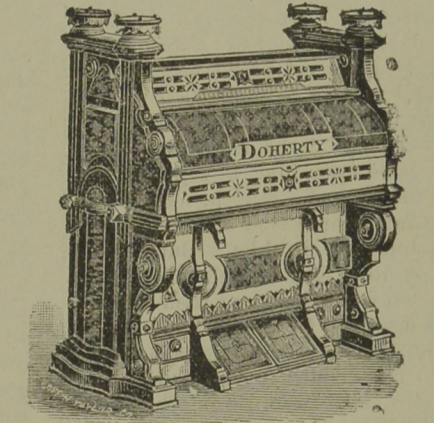
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